

() York, Conn. Sept. 25th 1878.



Dear Sir,

I have just rec^d a letter from my friend Wm Coker Esq. informing me (as from you) that an expedition is fitting out for the South Seas, and that among others a Botanist is wanted to accompany it. Mr. C. states the impossibility of his accepting the situation, should it be offered him, and obligingly proposes to recommend me for it, desiring me to write you immediately if it were my wish to obtain it. This, together with the half-hour's acquaintance which I had with you in the fall of 1823, when I left with you a small package of imperfect specimens of northern and Georgia plants, will I presume be a sufficient apology for my addressing you.

The situation mentioned by you to Mr. C. it would give me great pleasure to obtain, provided my qualifications are such as will enable me satisfactorily to perform its duties. To my bodily qualifications, (a point, which, considering the fatigue and dangers to

be encountered, would seem to deserve some share of attention.) I think little exception could be taken. A constitution naturally robust has by no means lost its former strength under the discipline, sometimes severe, which it has ~~long been~~ accustomed to sustain.

As to mental and acquired qualifications, I would say little, and perhaps little can be said. In justice to myself, however, I would state that they are founded upon a pretty close attention for 7 seasons to plants principally of this country, during which time I have formed a collection of nearly 3000 plants, mostly preserved by myself, with many duplicates of some species. My fondness for the science was at first, as my friends would say, excessive, and I find that increasing knowledge but "alit flammam". My acquaintance with foreign plants as I have before hinted is but limited, but the examination of most part of about 2000 species from Paris cultivated the last year in the garden of Dr. L'Her, has made me acquainted to some extent with a few foreign genera: ~~How far~~ Whether

the want of an extensive knowledge of foreign Botany will preclude a person from being useful, is for others to judge. If it is to be required of me to establish new genera and species to any extent I certainly am not ~~well~~ qualified: but if the collection and preservation of plants, and notices of such particulars as may not be readily ascertained from the dried specimens, be the main objects, I should hope that I might not disappoint expectations, ~~At least~~ for I feel that faithfulness & perseverance, as well as ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~gratified~~ ^{gratified} to my employers will not be wanting.

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~~information~~ respecting my qualifications I would beg leave to refer you particularly to Dr Eli Ives, N. H. Hall, my instructor for a year & more, also to Dr Engelm, Hooker, & Schubert, and Mr Brace, & ~~with~~ Dr L. C. Beck I have less acquaintance. there should or should not be a probability of my receiving the appointment, a speedy reply to this would be thankfully received, as it would either free me from suspense or enable me to rest more quietly in it.

During a residence of a year in Maryland & the

Iist. Col. and 2 years in Virginia I collected a number of plants which might be interesting to you. I had intended to see you and communicate specimens to you on my return in the fall of 1826, but unfortunately for me, you were absent, and I have since scarcely felt myself authorized to write. If such facts as I may have would be desirable to you, I will with pleasure communicate them. I am anxious to learn whether the Prod. of your Flora is soon to appear.

In haste I am with much respect

Yours &c. James M. Robbins.



Recd 1/22

Norfolk 21 Sept 26

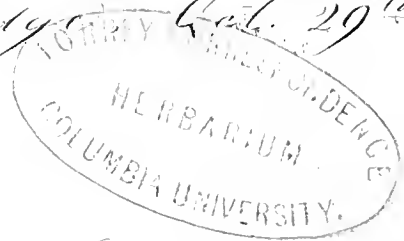
Dr. John Torrey

New York.

Recd with.

James M. Robbins
Sept - 25th 1828
Recd Sept 29th

Uxbridge Oct. 29th 1830.



Dear Sir,

This will be handed you by Mr. Whiting, a young gentleman of this vicinity, and a student in our office, who purposes to attend their lectures at your Institution, & whom I would recommend to your attention.

Some months have now elapsed since I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you which still remains unanswered. — Having entered, this year, in good earnest, upon the practice of my profession, being in connection with a physician whose business is quite extensive, I have found myself sufficiently occupied in endeavoring to perform the duties which have devolved upon me with satisfaction to myself. In the mean while I have kept myself quite aloof from Botany, except that I have not compelled myself (unpleasantly) to close my eyes upon its beautiful objects. Even correspondence with my botanical friends, until very lately, has, on my part, been wholly intermitted. I have in this exercised not a little forbearance, and fear I have too long tried that of my correspondents: if not, I shall now endeavor to place myself upon my former footing with them. I hope to be able hereafter to spend a portion of my time upon botanical subjects, which I think I can take up with increased interest.

Your last letter (of March) mentions the receipt of a box of plants, which I had forwarded by J. Battell Esq. I am gratified that you will be able to draw from its contents some facts of interest to students of American botany. It will give me pleasure, as far as I have the means, to communicate any additional information which you may choose to specify respecting the plants sent. I hope you will retain the package so long as you have need of any of the plants which it contains for farther examination or comparison (for I would gladly try you learn them all myself); and if no longer of use to you, I shall be happy to receive them at your leisure, with such other specimens as you may please to favor me with. On their arrival I shall ~~examine~~ examine the ~~specimens~~ ^{specimens} & your observations with intense interest. I find ~~that~~ that I can get them more safely if sent by the Steam boat to Providence; as there is water conveyance by the Blackstone to within 30 rods of my office door. The box can then if you please be directed to be left at Josiah Chapin & Co's, Providence. Mr. Whitin will take charge of the box to the boat as soon as prepared.

I have not learned what was the result of the mission of Dr. Gates doubtless very successful however unless he was assisted by sickness. — The Antarctic Expedition Fund I apprehend does not often forward notices of its discoveries in the nether world. At least, none of them have as yet reached me. — I would enquire

whether the Cryptogamia of Dr. Beck is published, and
is of much value, or whether we may hope for the ap-
pearance of your work upon that subject after the
completion of your Flora? Please favor me with a
letter at the time the box is forwarded.

I remain, Sir

truly yours

W. Robbins



J. W. D. Robbins

Oct 29 1882

Recd. Mr. D. Robbins

Am. Soc. May 14, 1883

New York

Prof. John Torrey

By favor of
Mr. C. D. Whittier